



# University of Hawaii at Manoa

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## SB 2437-78 and SB 2439-78 RELATING TO WATER RESOURCES

Statement for  
Senate Committee on Economic Development  
Public Hearing 28 February 1978

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SB 2437 and SB 2439 propose amendments to provisions in HRS 176 that pertain to water resources and their development. This statement on these bills does not reflect an institutional position of the University.

SB 2437 would require a report each year by the Board of Land and Natural Resources reviewing the status of water resources and their development in the State.

SB 2439 would add a new section to HRS 176 that would require submission of an analysis of the hydrologic consequences of any proposed water development, opportunity for public review of the analysis, and acceptance of the analysis by the Board of Land and Natural Resources prior to the undertaking of the development.

Serious questions have been raised as to the adequacy of water resources in Hawaii. As pointed out in the findings in SB 2439, further water developments may have significant consequences. However, this is true only in some areas of the State, not in the State as a whole.

The Department of Land and Natural Resources should certainly be much concerned with the overall water resources of the State, and not merely the water resources owned or developed by the State. However, the State Water Commission, recently appointed by the Governor, will, presumably within the next year, determine the problem areas, and how serious and how imminent the problems may be.

Although the purposes of both bills are worthwhile, there is, then a question whether amendments to State law intended to serve these purposes could be prepared with greater specificity a year from now.

There is also a question whether the purposes of SB 2439 could be met by requiring environmental impact statements for water development projects better than by requiring separate analyses of the hydrologic problems. The Environmental Center has suggested that the category: "actions that propose any new or expanded water development" be added to the categories of action listed in HRS 343-4(a) as covered by the EIS system. The same criteria of the significance of impacts and either the use of state or county lands or funds or the need for an agency approval should apply to this new category as to the present categories of actions covered.

We recognize that an EIS would not generally be required in the case of a private water development on private land unless it were in the Conservation District. However, the Board of Land and Natural Resources could not block such a water development, no matter what effects were disclosed in the analysis required under SB 2439.